

DESIGNATION STUDY:

Thomas Lowry Memorial
2330 Hennepin Avenue S, Minneapolis



October 2, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission
Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development
Designation Study for the Thomas Lowry Memorial

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Designation Study Purpose and Background

In July, 2014 Chuck Lutz, CPED interim director, submitted an application for nomination to the City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) for the Thomas Lowry Memorial at 2330 Hennepin Avenue S. After completing an initial review, CPED recommended to the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on July 22, 2014 that the property exhibited at least one of the historical designation criteria found in section 299.210 of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance. The HPC adopted CPED's findings and placed the Thomas Lowry Memorial under interim protection and called for a designation study to be conducted.

This study is intended to fulfill the requirements for local historic designation outlined in Title 23, Chapter 599.230 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances. The study is based on a review of resources including newspaper clippings, directories, academic publications, maps, and photos from the Minneapolis Collection and general collections at the Hennepin County Library, photos from the Minnesota Historical Society, historic building permits and maps from the City of Minneapolis, and published books.

BASIC PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Current name	Thomas Lowry Memorial
Historic Name	Thomas Lowry Memorial
Current Address	2330 Hennepin Avenue S (within Smith Triangle Park)
Historic Address	Virginia Triangle (intersection of Hennepin Avenue S, Lyndale Avenue S, and Douglas Avenue)
Original Construction Date	1915
Original Contractor	H. N. Leighton Company
Original Architect, Master builder, engineer, designer, artist, or craftsmen	Karl Bitter
Historic Use	Public Art
Current Use	Public Art
Ward:	7
Neighborhood:	East Isles

PART 1: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The Thomas Lowry Memorial consists of several pieces of public art arranged so as to create a cohesive monument to Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company (TCRT) founder, Thomas Lowry. The memorial stands in Smith Triangle Park, a typical small urban park. There is little programming aside from the memorial, which is very clearly its central feature.

Parcel location, shape, and size

The Thomas Lowry Memorial is located in Smith Triangle Park in the East Isles Neighborhood of Southwest Minneapolis. The memorial is sited at the north end of the park, facing south towards the acute “point” of the triangle at the intersection of Hennepin Avenue S, 24th Street W, and Emerson Avenue S. The lot is 11,830 square feet in area. The closest buildings to the property are the classical Temple Israel Synagogue to the west, and a single-story shopping center to the north. Further away, to the south and east are two-story early twentieth-century buildings with commercial uses on the first floor and apartments above (*Figure 1*).

Description of building(s) on the property

No structures are located on the parcel.

Description of landscape and landscape features

The site follows a layout typical of a small urban park—it is primarily covered in grass, with trees and benches interspersed. Divided into four quadrants by bisecting pathways, the park features a small hill and a paved terrace upon which the memorial sits, facing south.

Topography

The site slopes very slightly to the southwest, dropping approximately one foot across its width. Central to the site is a square hill, approximately two feet high, atop which the memorial sits.¹

Vegetation

Within the memorial’s granite base are two planters, in which the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board plants annuals (*Figure 2*). The site, apart from the portions covered by concrete, is grass. Along the northern edge of the property are two rows of coniferous trees—one row of approximately a dozen small to

medium sized trees right against the property line, and a second row of approximately six medium sized trees about ten feet to the south of the first. These two rows of coniferous trees serve to screen the blank wall of the strip mall to the north (*Figure 3*). Along the site's Emerson Avenue and Hennepin Avenue frontages, there are several deciduous boulevard trees—three on Hennepin Avenue, and five on Emerson Avenue, typical of streets in the area. Near the center of the site, just south of a concrete walkway cutting east-west across the site, are four bushy trees (*Figure 4*), and a single medium sized deciduous tree stands in the southwest quadrant of the site. Annuals are also planted around the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board sign in the southwest quadrant of the site (*Figure 5*).

Other landscape features

Below is a list of landscape features of the park. Apart from the memorial components themselves, the park's features are fairly standard for a small urban park.

Fences, gates, screens, retaining walls, and privacy walls: The only screening present on the site consists of trees along the northern edge, as described above.

Driveways, walkways, patios, and garden paths: In addition to sidewalks along Hennepin Avenue and Emerson Avenue, a concrete path leads from the acute angle of the site north to the base of the memorial. Here it meets a concrete path that crosses the site east to west. Immediately north of their intersection is a set of six concrete stairs leading to the concrete terrace upon which the memorial sits which measures approximately forty feet square.

Sculpture, Decorative Elements: The memorial is located at the northern end of the site, facing south. Central to the memorial is a bronze statue of Mr. Lowry, approximately nine feet tall. The statue stands atop a granite pedestal approximately three feet tall. Behind the statue of Mr. Lowry is a granite screen, approximately fifteen feet tall by thirty feet across (*Figure 6*). The screen is divided tripartite, with the central section bearing only minor detailing and serving as a frame for the statue that stands in front of it, while the two side panels bear more elaborate carvings along with inscriptions. Across the top of the two side panels is the inscription "IN MEMORY OF THOMAS LOWRY". Below this, each panel has a classical carving of a figure picking grapes. On the left panel is a male figure (*Figure 7*); while on the right is a female figure (*Figure 8*). Both figures face inwards towards Mr. Lowry. Below the figures are further inscriptions. The left panel reads: "BE THIS COMMUNITY STRONG AND ENDURING

IT WILL DO HOMAGE TO THE MEN WHO GUIDED ITS GROWTH". The right panel reads: "THE LESSON OF A PUBLIC SPIRIT: LIFE IS A TREE EVER BEARING NEW FRUIT". The pedestal and screen sit together on a base constructed of granite block, which features two planters, one in front of the left panel and one in front of the right panel. Four ornamental light posts are also present, two to the rear of the granite screen, and two to the front (*Figure 9*). A survey marker of undetermined age is embedded in the granite block base on the eastern side (*Figure 10*).

Benches, Signs, and other Objects: At the far northern edge of the site, east of the memorial, are three south-facing concrete and wood benches, of a design common in many Minneapolis parks (*Figure 11*). Four more such benches sit on the western edge of the site, south of the east-west walkway, facing east. Near the southern tip of the site is a wood and aluminum sign, typical of Minneapolis parks, designed to address those walking up the central path, along Hennepin Avenue, and 24th Street, which reads "Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board / Smith Triangle" (*Figure 5*).

PART 2: DISCUSSION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas Lowry Memorial was built to recognize the contributions of Twin City Rapid Transit Company founder and real estate magnate Thomas Lowry to the City of Minneapolis. In 1910, just over a year after Lowry's death, the Thomas Lowry Memorial Association was organized by several prominent Minneapolitans seeking to embed the memory of Mr. Lowry forever in the public consciousness. The association selected world-renowned sculptor Karl Bitter to design the memorial, which was built by the H.N. Leighton Company under the oversight of Minneapolis sculptor Charles S. Wells. After Bitter's death in April 1915, Wells saw to the completion of Bitter's vision and the memorial's dedication on August 19, 1915.

In 1967, the bronze statute and lamp posts, along with the granite screen, pedestal, and base, were relocated from the Virginia Triangle to Smith Triangle Park to make way for the construction of Interstate 94 and the Lowry Hill Tunnel.

Thomas Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company

Regarded as one of the great Minneapolitans of his era, Thomas Lowry first served as president of both the Minneapolis Street Railway Company and the Saint Paul City Railway Company, before merging them to create the Twin City Rapid Transit Company (TCRT), becoming its first president. Under Lowry's visionary leadership, TCRT extended service to new areas, driving growth and shaping much of the urban fabric of modern Minneapolis. Regarded as one of the city's great visionaries, Lowry was mourned across the city and indeed across the county upon his death in 1909.

Early Life

Thomas Lowry was born in 1843 and raised on the family farm outside Pleasant View, Illinois.² An early influence in Thomas Lowry's life was Abraham Lincoln, who likely inspired Lowry's interest in law—Lowry's father, Sam Lowry, employed Lincoln as his lawyer in several land disputes, and thought very highly of him. In 1858 the teenage Lowry traveled with his father to Galesburg, Illinois to attend the Lincoln-Douglas debate held there. Lowry returned to Galesburg three years later, as a student at Lombard University,³ but dropped out due to illness two years later. After a brief period working on the family farm, Lowry studied law under Judge John C. Bagby in Rushville, Illinois, before being admitted to the Illinois Bar at the age of 24.⁴

Like thousands of others in the years immediately following the Civil War, Lowry headed west in 1867, arriving in Minneapolis, a frontier town growing rapidly on the profits of milling the timber and grain of the infant state.⁵ Lowry began

practicing law, sharing his first office with a Dr. Hannibal H. Kimball, in a space that also served as living quarters for the two young men.⁶ In Lowry's first year in Minneapolis, he became close friends with Clinton Morrison, son of mill owner and Minneapolis' first mayor, Dorilus Morrison, who became a mentor of sorts to Lowry.⁷

From Law to Real Estate

Lowry's path towards TCRT began the following year, when Dr. Kimball went into practice with Dr. Calvin G. Goodrich. Dr. Goodrich, who had worked as a surveyor prior to attending medical school, had recently arrived in Minneapolis as well, and was beginning to be involved in the real estate trade in the growing town.⁸ Lowry soon began representing Dr. Goodrich, among others, in real estate deals and land disputes, and by the end of his second year in Minneapolis, Lowry had begun trading property in his own name.⁹ Two years later, in 1870, Lowry married Dr. Goodrich's daughter, Beatrice, cementing his connection with his now father-in-law, Dr. Goodrich.¹⁰ Soon after, Lowry and Goodrich began developing large parcels of land, beginning with the relatively small Lowry Addition, followed by the expansive Groveland Addition, which consisted of 75 blocks.¹¹

Lowry and the Minneapolis Street Railway

The story of the Minneapolis Street Railway begins with Colonel William S King. King, a prominent abolitionist and journalist from New York, had moved to Minneapolis in 1858, where he engaged in politics and cattle farming, serving as a US representative 1875-1877,¹² and building the 1,400 acre Lyndale Farm.¹³ Seeking to capitalize on his holdings in Minneapolis, King turned to his friend, Philo Remington to finance a street railway between central Minneapolis and his land south of 34th Street. Remington had made a significant fortune developing the first commercially viable rifle barrel milled from cast steel rather than rolled from steel sheet. After the end of the Civil War, Remington had retooled several of his factories to produce a wide variety of steel products, among them steam-powered streetcars; in addition, he was flush with capital from his immensely successful manufacturing businesses.¹⁴ In 1873, the Minneapolis Street Railway Company was chartered, and began laying tracks down 3rd Street, which were torn up the same year—after the bankruptcy of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Minneapolis went into an economic slide that brought the Minneapolis Street Railway with it.¹⁵

In 1875, Lowry was retained by King to represent him in the reorganization of the defunct Minneapolis Street Railway.¹⁶ During the course of negotiations, Remington's agents were so impressed with Lowry that he was selected as vice-president of the recapitalized Minneapolis Street Railway Company. The first line, operational by the end of that same year, connected central Minneapolis with the

University of Minnesota by way of Washington Ave, Hennepin Ave, and 4th St SE. By the next year, the company had built two additional lines: one traveling south on Hennepin to 12th Street, and one from Washington and Plymouth Avenues to Cedar Avenue and 4th Street. These first lines utilized horse-drawn cars, rather than Remington's steam-powered cars.¹⁷ While these early lines were somewhat successful, King was unable to keep up with the interest on his vast land holdings and went bankrupt. After King's bankruptcy in 1878, Lowry was able to form a new group of Minneapolitans to buy the now uninterested New York investors out of the company, making himself the new company president.¹⁸ By 1881, when Lowry became the sole owner of the Minneapolis Street Railway, all three of the original lines had been extended, and two new lines had been built.¹⁹

St. Paul City Railway, Modernization, and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company

Founded in 1872 and financed by investors from New York, much like the Minneapolis Street Railway Company, the St. Paul City Railway also found itself in dire financial straits. In 1882 a group of businessmen from Saint Paul, plus Lowry, purchased the company out of foreclosure, and by 1883, Lowry had secured full control of the company.²⁰ At about the same time, Lowry also gained control of the Lyndale Railway Company, which had finally realized King's dream of running Remington's steam-powered streetcars to his Lyndale Farm, and had extended service to Excelsior on Lake Minnetonka.²¹

By the mid-1880s, Minneapolis had essentially outgrown the horse-drawn streetcar. As citizens grew more accustomed to comforts that came with the city's increased stature, such as sidewalks, streetlights, running water, and sewers, the horse as a power source for mass transit began to be seen as dirty and unreliable.²² Many other cities had begun the process of installing new cable car lines to replace their horse-drawn streetcars. Lowry, however, was resistant to adopting the cable cars favored by the public, as he had legitimate concerns about the reliability of cable cars during Minnesota winters. Lowry was set on electric streetcars, which had only recently been proven effective.²³ In the 1880s, electricity was misunderstood and viewed with distrust by a superstitious public. Lowry's first attempt to build an experimental electric streetcar line in 1888 was blocked by the City Council, but after a long political battle, he was granted the right to build one line with electric streetcars, along with three cable car lines. Upon the completion of the new 4th Avenue line in late 1889, the public and council were so impressed that they directed Lowry to halt construction of the three cable car lines and begin the process of constructing an entirely new system of electric lines.²⁴ The following year, the St. Paul City Railway was also authorized to construct a new system of electric lines.²⁵ Within the next three years, all the lines of the Minneapolis Street Railway Company, St. Paul City Railway Company, and Lyndale Railway Company were rebuilt for electric

streetcars, giving the Twin Cities one of the most efficient and best maintained mass transit systems on the globe.²⁶

Due to financial difficulties arising from the tremendous expense of constructing the new electric streetcar systems, the companies were merged in 1891, becoming the new Twin City Rapid Transit Company.²⁷ From its creation until well after Lowry's death, the Twin City Rapid Transit Company provided safe and efficient transportation to Minneapolitans, and drove development of the city's new residential and industrial districts. Streetcar transfer points dictated the locations of major commercial centers.²⁸ Streetcars were instrumental in shaping Minneapolis into the great city that it is today, allowing the city to expand beyond the bounds of walking distance and giving average citizens access to homes, jobs, and recreational opportunities far greater than what had previously been available to them.²⁹ As identified under the street railways context statement in the *Minneapolis Preservation Plan*, street railways enhanced property values and shaped neighborhood and commercial development. Much of Minneapolis' built environment owes its form to streetcar development patterns.

Thomas Lowry's Service to Minneapolis

While it is clear today that Lowry contributed greatly to the development of Minneapolis through TCRT, he was also highly regarded for his contributions by his contemporaries.

Mr. Lowry was, undoubtedly, one of the most beloved men in Minneapolis, by all classes of people. He was one of the bravest men I ever saw. I have seen Mr. Lowry when things were going hard for him and I have seen him when everything was bright and cheerful, and he was always the same. Apparently he never lost his nerve. In the very hardest of times he was the most alert and resourceful and was equal to all occasions. –Francis A Chamberlain, in the Minneapolis Journal, 1909.

We have the best system of electric roads in the country. No city approaches us in excellence of equipment, in the application of the latest developments of science, in the perfection of all details. Whatever its size, no one city in America has so many miles of electric line as Minneapolis and St. Paul. Indeed, if I am to credit an article in the December number of the Cosmopolitan Review, we have today in our two cities electric mileage nearly equal to that in all over American cities united. No large city, outside of our own two, has as yet been able to discard its horse cars. We lead America; we lead the world. Strong words, but absolutely true! – Archbishop John Ireland, in the Minneapolis Tribune, January 12, 1892.

Great wealth buys great power, and often great pride and arrogance. We all know that ourselves. We know how hard it is to be simple once we got

to be rich. But it is not hard for him. He is the same Tom, to rich and poor, high and low alike, as he was twenty or twenty-five years ago when he hustled through the streets of Minneapolis hunting for a victim on whom he could experiment as an unfledged lawyer. I don't know that he deserves much credit for this, for I hardly think he can help it. Let me close by saying here's to our guest! Big-hearted, broad-shouldered, long-legged, long-headed Tom. Boast as we may of our sunny skies and our incomparable climate, we have to admit that in the Northwest is always Lowry. –Senator Pierce, in the Minneapolis Tribune, January 12, 1892.

Nor can I, on this occasion, fail to publicly thank one who, next to the founder of this hotel, has done so much for Minneapolis and myself—a gentleman whom everyone present hails as a friend, and who has, as my advisor and advocate, proven a friend indeed. From the earliest thought of building a hotel here, down to the present moment, he has been never tiring, but always ready and anxious to do more; many trips has he made away from the city on business, doing anything and everything to encourage and assist me and advance the interests of the city he loves so well, and all this without and pecuniary interest, and without thought of fee or reward. How to sufficiently thank him I know not—I cannot find words to express my gratitude to the man who has uniformly declared that he would “stand by John until the hotel is finished and every obligation satisfied.” You all know to whom I refer, but you do not know how much he has done, or the struggle of the past few months. One thing we all know: The City of Minneapolis, the West Hotel and ourselves never had a better friend than the tried and true, genial Thomas Lowry. –John West, November 19, 1884.

The genuine grief manifested in St. Paul and Minneapolis over the death of Thomas Lowry, President of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company, conveys a plain lesson. When his fellow-townsmen acclaim a man as a public spirited citizen and, when that person happens to be the owner of the greatest public service corporation in the community, the verdict has unusual interest. In a day when the mere connection with a public utility is often viewed as a priori ground for suspicion, and when the management of street railways, in particular, has been the object of so much attack, the position that Mr. Lowry held was unique. It was through him the St. Paul and Minneapolis were welded together by a railroad system which its patrons did not look upon with angry derision, but were wont to boast of as the best in the country. Mr. Lowry appears to have been a captain of industry who at the same time was so fortunate as to absorb some ideas of a social service and social responsibility. He was not without his critics, but to read the esteem in which he was held by a great variety and number of men, from Gov. Johnson to Cyrus Northrup, makes a citizen of

New York or Philadelphia look about and wonder why they have not his fellow. –New York Evening Post, February 13, 1909.

You will never fade from my mind as long as I have any mind. You are a successful man, not alone because of the many thousands you have amassed, but because you have kept intact the amiable spirit your creator gave you and won the good will and good wishes of your neighbors and of all those who ever knew you. That is just what everyone is saying about Mr. Lowry today. –Dr. Tuttle, as printed in the Minneapolis Journal, February 8, 1909.

I have known Thomas Lowry ever since he came to Minneapolis and he has been as good a citizen as this city will ever have. When he first came to Minneapolis he had little or no money, but he had activity and a fund of humor, what is more, ambition. He bought the street railway and he got it for 25 cents on the dollar. The stock was worth little or nothing at that time and many people had doubts as to his good judgment, but subsequent years have shown just how clever he was. He realized that Minneapolis was to be a great city and he showed that he had faith in it. He knew that Minneapolis would make good. Mr. Lowry's strict honesty and integrity have always been among his chief characteristics. He always had a strong sense of humor also. As a matter of fact, he was always like Lincoln in that respect. He was fond of telling stories and they were in point, too. Another characteristic of his was his generosity. He never lost an opportunity to do a good turn for anyone and he had hundreds of friends who would do almost anything for him. I knew Mr. Lowry for more than 40 years. Two traits of his character stand out before all others as I look back through the years since I first met him—his powers of persuasion and his memory for names and faces. He was one of the most persuasive talkers I ever knew. It was said of him that on several occasions in the infancy of his street railway interests, he persuaded his creditors not only to extend the time of their claims on him but even to advance further tenders of aid, at times when they were at first inclined to cut him short. He was a capital entertainer, delighting in telling stories, and had rare magnetic power in winning men to him. There is no question that this city will miss Mr. Lowry. –C M Loring, 1909

The Thomas Lowry Memorial

In response to the significant public desire for a memorial site to Mr. Lowry, the Thomas Lowry Memorial Association was organized in 1910 by several of Lowry's friends and partners. Among the members of the association were such Minneapolis greats as J.E. Northrup, Calvin Goodrich, and John S. Bradstreet. In 1911, the association's petition of the Minneapolis Park Board to locate the memorial at the Virginia Triangle was granted.³⁰ While it is not known why the Virginia Triangle was the association's

preferred site, one can conjecture that the site's prominence as a natural gateway and one of the city's busiest intersections played a role, along with its position as an important streetcar junction and proximity to the Lowry home. The association selected Karl Bitter, a world famous sculptor who had completed dozens of memorials around the world, to design the memorial. Bitter sought to design not only a statue, but a cohesive monument that fit with and contributed to the overall feel of the surrounding area.³¹ The significance of the site and positioning might have best been described by the *Minneapolis Star* on June 8, 1912: *"It is a commanding, buoyant figure, showing Mr. Lowry as he was known to the thousands of Minneapolis people as he walked through the streets. The figure, standing at the crest of the hill that took its name from Mr. Lowry, will face into the plaza. The site is commanding."* Funds for the memorial came chiefly from Mr. Lowry's family and closest associates, but many ordinary Minneapolitans also contributed.³² Bitter sculpted the state of Mr. Lowry from clay before having it cast in bronze, and also constructed a full-scale model of the granite screen, which he sent to Minneapolis to serve as reference for two of his associates, Corrado Novani and William Archie, who completed the carvings under the supervision of Minneapolis sculptor Charles Wells. Bitter had planned to come to Minneapolis to supervise the final touches of the carvings, however, due to his sudden death on April 9, 1915, Wells saw to the completion of Bitter's plan and the memorial's dedication on August 18, 1915.³³

Smith Triangle Park

The property on which the memorial now sits, Smith Triangle Park, was first proposed to become a park in 1894, when its owner, J.E. Smith, a prominent grain merchant, attempted to donate the land to the Park Board.³⁴ At the time, the entire block was undeveloped.³⁵ For reasons unknown, the board voted against the acquisition of the land, which remained vacant until the Mr. Smith again offered to donate the land in 1899. In 1900, the Park Board accepted the property and proceeded to grade and replant the property. Until the Thomas Lowry Memorial was relocated to the site in 1967, Smith Triangle Park saw little in the way of improvements or programming.³⁶

Karl Bitter

Karl Bitter was an Austrian-born American sculptor. Internationally recognized as among the greatest sculptors of his era, Bitter received many honors over the course of his life. He won the silver medal in sculpture at the Paris Exposition in 1900, the gold medal at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, the silver medal at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1902, and the gold medal at the Saint Louis Exposition in 1904. He also served as the director of sculpture at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, the 1904 Saint Louis Exposition, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. In addition, Bitter served as the vice-president of the National Institute of Arts and Sciences for three years, and as president of the National Sculpture Society for one year.³⁷ Bitter worked on the Thomas Lowry Memorial from 1911 until his death in 1915, four months before the completion of the memorial.³⁸ Bitter is responsible for dozens of memorials and much sculptural

ornamentation across the country, however, the Thomas Lowry Memorial is his only work in Minnesota. The next nearest works of Bitter are ornamentation on the Wisconsin state capitol building, followed by three pieces in Saint Louis, Missouri—one public sculpture and two pieces in the collection of the Missouri History Museum.³⁹

Horace Leighton

Horace Newell Leighton, president and founder of the H. N. Leighton Company, which preformed the concrete and stone work on the Thomas Lowry Memorial, was among Minneapolis' most prominent builders and led a very active civic life. Coming to Minneapolis as a carpenter in 1876⁴⁰, Mr. Leighton quickly found success in the construction business, serving as the general contractor for many buildings in Minneapolis, including four individually designated landmarks: the Basilica of Saint Mary,⁴¹ the Farmers and Mechanics Bank, the Wesley Methodist Church, and the Advance Thresher Company.⁴² In addition, the company constructed several buildings that are contributing properties to the Saint Anthony Falls and Warehouse District historic districts.⁴³ Mr. Leighton also served as president of the northwestern branch of the Associated General Contractors of America.⁴⁴ Additionally, Mr. Leighton was elected as third ward alderman in 1898 and again in 1900, and was later elected to the school board in 1910.⁴⁵

PART 3: RATIONALE FOR LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Local historic designation is an official action that promotes the preservation of historic resources by recognizing specific people, places, and events that are deemed to be significant in relation to the history and heritage of Minneapolis. Through the requirements set out in the Heritage Preservation chapter of the City's Code of Ordinances, the act of designation establishes a series of protections that are administered through the ordinance to ensure protection of significant places throughout the city against demolition or inappropriate alterations.

Designation Criteria

Title 23, Chapter 599.210 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances lists seven criteria which are considered when trying to determine whether a property is worthy of local designation as a landmark because of its particular significance. The Thomas Lowry Memorial is considered below in relation to each of the seven designation criteria.

Criteria #1: The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic, or social history.

The property is significant under criterion one due to its association with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage. The significance of Minneapolis' streetcars in shaping the built form of the city is examined in Part II of this report. In a city where the vast majority of streetcar infrastructure has been obliterated, the Thomas Lowry Memorial stands as one of the few objects which, in the public eye, serve to remind the citizenry of Minneapolis' streetcar heritage.

Criteria #2: The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups.

The property is significant under criterion two due to its association with Thomas Lowry. Lowry's significant place in the history of Minneapolis is examined in Part II of this report. Since the demolition of the Lowry home in 1932 the memorial has been the property most associated with Mr. Lowry and his contributions to the City of Minneapolis.

Criteria #3: The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity.

The property does not appear to be significant under criterion three. While streetcars were once essential to Minneapolis' identity and they remain an

important part of the city's shared heritage, their disappearance from city streets over sixty years ago has removed them from features identified by residents as integral to their neighborhood identity. No evidence linking the property to other features of city or neighborhood identity has been found.

Criteria #4: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

The property does not appear to be significant under criterion four. While the classical sculpture of the memorial is significant as art, it does not represent an architectural achievement.

Criteria #5: The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail.

The property does not appear to be significant under criterion five. While Karl Bitter's original landscape plan may have been somewhat significant, the current landscape plan is rather ordinary, consisting of a mostly flat grassy site populated by dispersed deciduous trees. The memorial itself sits atop a small hill, with a concrete path to the south and asphalt paths to the east and west. Several benches line the perimeter. Apart from the public art of the memorial proper, this landscape design is quite typical of compact urban parks.

Criteria #6: The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects.

The property is significant under criterion six due to its association with New York sculptor and designer Karl Bitter, as well as Minneapolis builder Horace N. Leighton. The Thomas Lowry Memorial Association selected world-renowned sculptor Karl Bitter to design the memorial.⁴⁶ The memorial was constructed by the H. N. Leighton Company under the oversight of Charles S. Wells.⁴⁷

The significance of these master craftsmen is examined in Part II of this report..

Criteria #7: The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

There are likely no archeological resources on the site. There are no records of any structures ever having been built on the site. The 1895 plat map shows the entire block upon which the subject property is located as vacant land. The land currently occupied by Smith Triangle Park was proposed to become a park in 1884; however the park board refused the offer of the landowner. In 1899 the land was again offered to the Park Board, who accepted, creating Smith Triangle Park. The Park Board maintained trees and grass on the property, but provided

little to no programming until 1967, when the Thomas Lowry Memorial was moved to the site.⁴⁸

The property is located approximately 900 feet from the nearest known historic body of water, a small wetland which in 1895 was centered approximately on the present-day intersection of Emerson Avenue and 26th Street. The nearest historic body of water that could have likely provided water to indigenous peoples would have been Lake Blaisdell located approximately 1150 feet away at approximately 22nd Street and Aldrich Avenue, which existed from at least 1850 to 1900, and was backfilled by the Minneapolis Sewer Department. The nearest extant body of water is Lake of the Isles, approximately 2100 feet away.⁴⁹ It is unlikely that the site would have served as a camp or settlement for either indigenous peoples or early European settlers, as its distance from fresh water would have made it an inferior site to many others in the area.

Integrity of historic resource

The following is an assessment of the Thomas Lowry Memorial as it relates to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the Department of the Interior:

Location: The property does not retain integrity of location. The memorial was originally erected at the Virginia Triangle—a small park at the intersection of Hennepin, Lyndale, and Douglas Avenues. In 1967, to make way for the construction of Interstate 94 and the Lowry Hill Tunnel, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board relocated the memorial to Smith Triangle Park, at 2330 Hennepin Avenue S, and sold land including the Virginia Triangle to the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The memorial still stands at Smith Triangle Park.⁵⁰

Design: The property does contain some elements of the classical style. Due to the fact that there has been no change to the granite memorial itself, all of the design elements originally present in the portion of the memorial which was relocated from the Virginia Triangle to Smith Triangle Park are fully intact. Certainly some design elements were lost when the landscape was changed when the memorial was moved. It is clear that the arrangement of the plaza has changed. The locations of the lamp posts today do not match their locations in historic photos. Additionally, the plaza of the original memorial was much larger, with a wider set of stairs leading up to the plaza. Original benches did not survive the memorial's relocation. However, the relationship between critical elements of the memorial remains the same at Smith Triangle as at the Virginia Triangle. Due to the lack of historic photos focused on any portion of the landscape aside from the memorial itself, one may surmise that the statue and granite screens were always considered to be the primary landscape components. The granite screen, pedestal, base, and bronze statue retain their original spatial relationships and thus integrity of design. The historic lamp posts are also in similar locations

relative to the principal components of the memorial, to the front and rear of the granite screen, however, their locations do not correspond precisely to their previous locations, a fact which appears to be a function of the smaller plaza at the new site (*Figure 14, Figure 15, Figure 16*).

Setting: The Thomas Lowry Memorial retains integrity of setting. While the memorial was relocated to 1967, its new home at Smith Triangle Park is similar to its former home at the Virginia Triangle. Both parks consist of the leftover space where the angled Hennepin Avenue bisects streets that conform to Minneapolis' street grid. When relocated to Smith Triangle, the memorial was sited at the back of the park, facing the acute angle of the intersection. While there certainly was an association between the memorial's original siting at the intersection of three streetcar lines and Minneapolis' streetcar heritage, its present location is also along a significant historic streetcar route. By relocating the property to a new site of a similar plan and similar surrounding conditions, integrity of setting was kept largely intact during the relocation. Indeed, even if the memorial had not been relocated, the symbolism of placing Mr. Lowry's memorial at the intersection of several streetcar lines would be lost on much of the public today, as said streetcar lines are no longer extant. Its present location is less than five-eighths of a mile from its original siting, and it remains surrounded largely by commercial buildings built in the streetcar era, in a neighborhood whose development was driven by streetcars.

Materials: The memorial retains integrity of materials in large part due to the efforts of the Thomas Lowry Memorial Association and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board who undertook ongoing maintenance of the memorial, routinely cleaning the artwork. The memorial's construction of bronze and granite, highly durable materials, has also contributed to its retention of integrity. The granite block base of the memorial has seen some damage. However, by comparing the current damage to historic photos, it appears that none of the granite blocks have been damaged to the point that the Park Board has deemed them in need of replacement (*Figure 19, Figure 20*). The globes of the historic lamp posts appear to have been replaced (*Figure 9, Figure 16*). It is quite understandable that glass lamp post globes could not be expected to survive ninety nine years of exposure to the elements.

Workmanship: The Thomas Lowry Memorial retains integrity of workmanship. The work of local quarrymen and stone-carvers is just as visible in the memorial today as it was in 1915. Comparing the memorial today to historic photos, the only visible change is in the globes of the historic lamp posts, which appear to have been replaced with compatible substitutes.

Feeling: The Thomas Lowry Memorial does not retain integrity of feeling in large part. The memorial was originally sited at what was perhaps the busiest intersection in the city, surrounded by streetcars and autos, a proud monument to

one of the men who most shaped the urban fabric that it stood at the center of. Lowry stood over the intersection, almost as a guardian greeting the multitudes of streetcar passengers that passed him by, headed to various corners of the city. Today, the memorial still stands along busy Hennepin Avenue, but set back from the street, partially obscured by trees, rather than in the middle of hustle and bustle. Additionally, streetcars have long since vanished from Hennepin Avenue.

Association: The Thomas Lowry Memorial fully retains integrity of association. The memorial remains among the properties most associated with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage, and is certainly the extant property most associated with Thomas Lowry. In a city where most of the historic street railway infrastructure has been obliterated, the Thomas Lowry Memorial is one of the extant properties that the public most directly associates with the history of streetcars in Minneapolis. Due to the memorial's materials of bronze and granite, as well as its straightforward design and inscription, the purpose of the memorial and its association with Mr. Lowry has remained obvious to all passersby throughout the years.

Relationship to the body of locally-designated properties in Minneapolis

The City of Minneapolis designates properties that represent and reflect elements of the city's culture, social, economic, religious, political, architectural, or aesthetic history as local heritage landmarks. As of July 2014, 158 individual properties are designated as landmarks in the City of Minneapolis, including the Crowell block, which is the only property currently designated in part due to its association with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage, as well as many homes and other properties associated with prominent Minneapolitans.

The Thomas Lowry Memorial is unique in the City of Minneapolis and among those properties currently listed as historic landmarks. While the property is certainly significant for its association with prominent Minneapolitans and master craftsmen and designers, where it stands out from among the body of Minneapolis' currently designated properties is in its association with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage. The street railways context of the city's history is grossly underrepresented in the city's current designation relative to the significant role streetcars played in shaping the Minneapolis of today. The Thomas Lowry Memorial is among the best candidates for preservation due to its association with streetcars, and its association with Thomas Lowry, Karl Bitter, and other important Minneapolitans further enhances its eligibility for designation.

Relationship to the Minneapolis Preservation Plan

The proposed designation helps fulfill the goals outlined in the 1990 *Preservation Plan for the City of Minneapolis* by systematically studying a property for its potential for preservation. In addition, the plan also calls for the specific preservation of properties related to Minneapolis' streetcar heritage in section 4.9.12, *Subcontext: Street Railways, 1873-1954*.

Comprehensive and Long-Range Planning

Title 23, Chapter 599.260 of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances requires the planning director to submit all proposed designations to the Minneapolis City Planning Commission for review and comment on the proposed designation. In its review, the City Planning Commission shall consider but not be limited to the following factors:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan.
- (2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area.
- (3) The consistency of the proposed designation with applicable development plans or development objectives adopted by the city council.

The relationship of the proposed designation to the city's comprehensive plan: The designation of the Thomas Lowry Memorial is supported by the Parks and Open Spaces section of the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, particularly Policy 7.5, "Protect landscapes that are significant to the historic legacy of Minneapolis, the region and state, and preserve and expand artistic features in publicly accessed open spaces." Furthermore, policy 7.5.1 states "Encourage the preservation of historic buildings, memorials, and monuments found in open spaces throughout the city." The Heritage Preservation section of the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan also supports the designation of the Thomas Lowry Memorial, as it promotes the designation of properties found to be significant to the history of Minneapolis under the subcontexts identified in the *Minneapolis Preservation Plan*, including street railways.

The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area: The designation should have little effect on the surrounding area. Perhaps by guaranteeing that Smith Triangle will remain a public park focused around the memorial, nearby properties may be slightly more desirable, which could contribute to an increased density of sustainable residential and commercial development.

National Register Status

The Thomas Lowry Memorial is not currently listed on the National Register. It appears that the property may be eligible to be added to the register under criterion A, association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and criterion B, association with the lives of significant persons in the past.

State Designation

The Thomas Lowry Memorial is not currently designated by the State of Minnesota.

Period of Significance

The proposed period of significance is 1915-1967. During this fifty-two year period the memorial stood unmodified in its original location, fully exhibiting Karl Bitter's original design and its association with Minneapolis' streetcar heritage. After the memorial was moved, the overall landscape plan as designed by Bitter was lost, and its associations somewhat diminished. Since 1967, landscape features at its new location of Smith Triangle Park have not been representative of the work of master designers, nor have they further enhanced the memorial's associations with historically significant persons or trends.

PART 4: REGISTRATION AND CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

NAME OF PROPERTY	
Historic Name	Thomas Lowry Memorial
Current Name	Thomas Lowry Memorial
Other Names Used	N/A
LOCATION OF PROPERTY	
Street and Number	2330 Hennepin Ave S
Is building located on its original site?	No
Date if moved	1967
OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY	
Owner's Name	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Owner's Address	2117 West River Road Minneapolis, MN 55411
CLASSIFICATION	
Ownership of Property	Public
Category of property	Object
Number of contributing resources within property	Buildings: 0 Structures: 0 Sites: 0 Objects: 6
Number of non-contributing resources within property	Buildings: 0 Structures: 0 Sites: 0 Objects: 10
Listed on the National Register of Historic Places?	No
Date of NRHP listing?	Not Applicable

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USE AND FUNCTION	
Historic Use	Public Art
Current Use	Public Art
DESCRIPTION	
Architectural classification/style	N/A
<u>Materials:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statue • Pedestal • Screen • Light Posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronze • Granite • Granite • Bronze
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	
Applicable local designation criteria	Criteria 1, 2, and 6.
Related local context (s)	Transportation, Subcontext: Street Railways, 1873-1954
Significant dates	1909—Death of Thomas Lowry 1915—Completion of Memorial 1967—Memorial Relocated to Smith Triangle Park
Period (s) of significance	1915-1967
Cultural affiliation	
Names of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen, and/or architects	Karl Bitter, Horace N Leighton
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES	
	See Sources section
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA	
Size of parcel	0.27 acres, 11,830 square feet
PIN number	3302924120113

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Legal Description	Lots 8 Thru 11 Incl And The S 20 Ft Of Lots 7 And 12 Ex Part Taken For Blvd
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PART 5: PHOTOGRAPHS, DRAWINGS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS



Figure 1. Thomas Lowry Memorial & Environs, aerial image, source: Minneatlas



Figure 2, Planters in Granite Block Base, facing northwest, source: CPED Files



Figure 3, Trees along north property line, facing northeast, source: CPED Files



Figure 4, Trees near center of site, facing southwest, source: CPED Files



Figure 5, Smith Triangle sign, facing north, source: CPED Files

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Figure 6, Thomas Lowry Memorial, facing north, source: CPED Files



Figure 7, left panel of granite screen, facing north, source: CPED Files

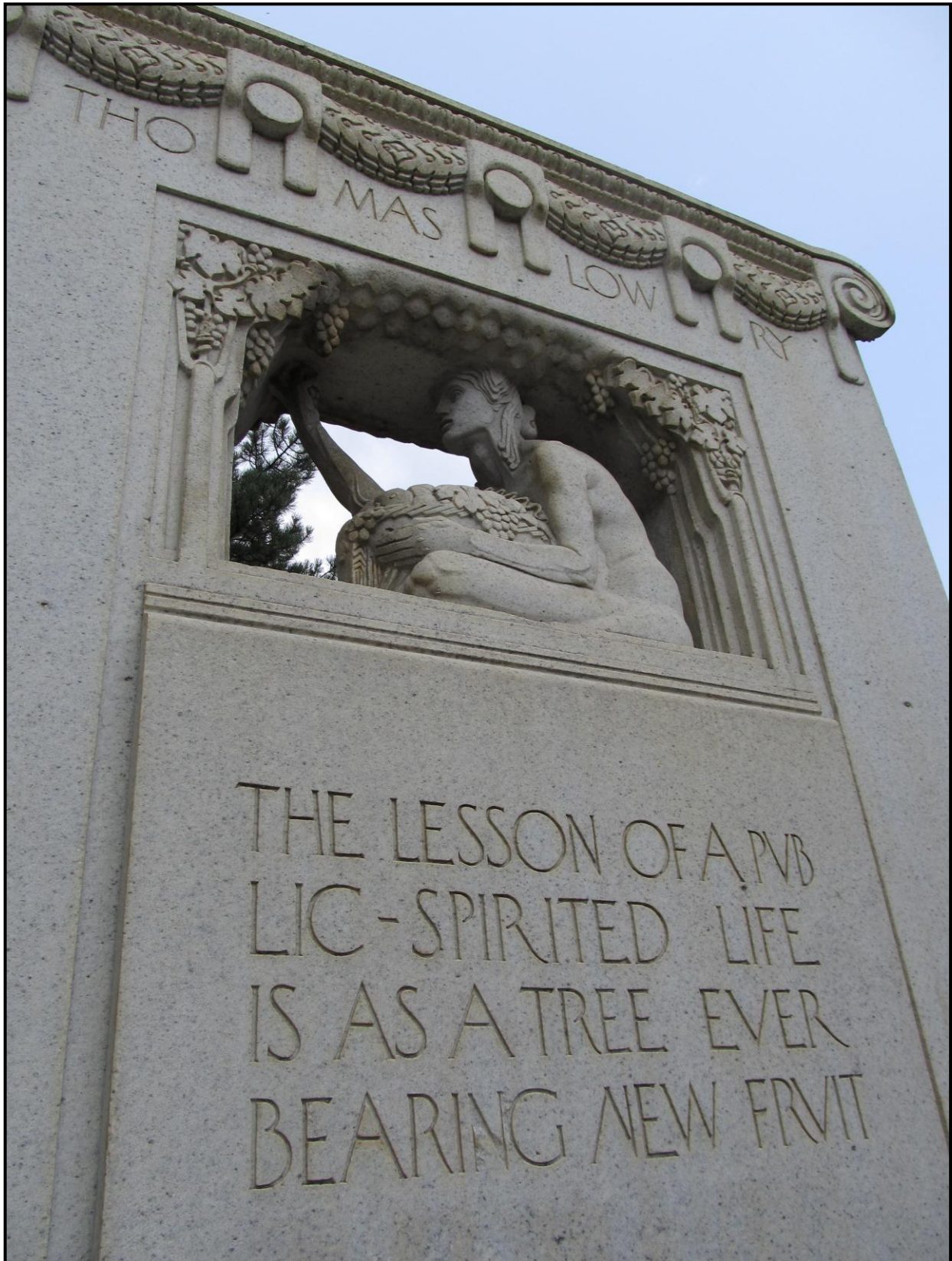


Figure 8, right panel of granite screen, facing north, source: CPED Files



Figure 9, lamp post to rear of granite screen, facing west, source: CPED Files



Figure 10, survey marker in east side of granite base, facing west, source: CPED Files



Figure 11, park benches on northern end of the site, facing northeast,
source: CPED Files

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Figure 12, south elevation, facing north, source: CPED Files



Figure 13, east elevation, facing west, source: CPED Files



Figure 14, north elevation, facing south, source: CPED Files

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Figure 15, west elevation, facing east, source: CPED Files

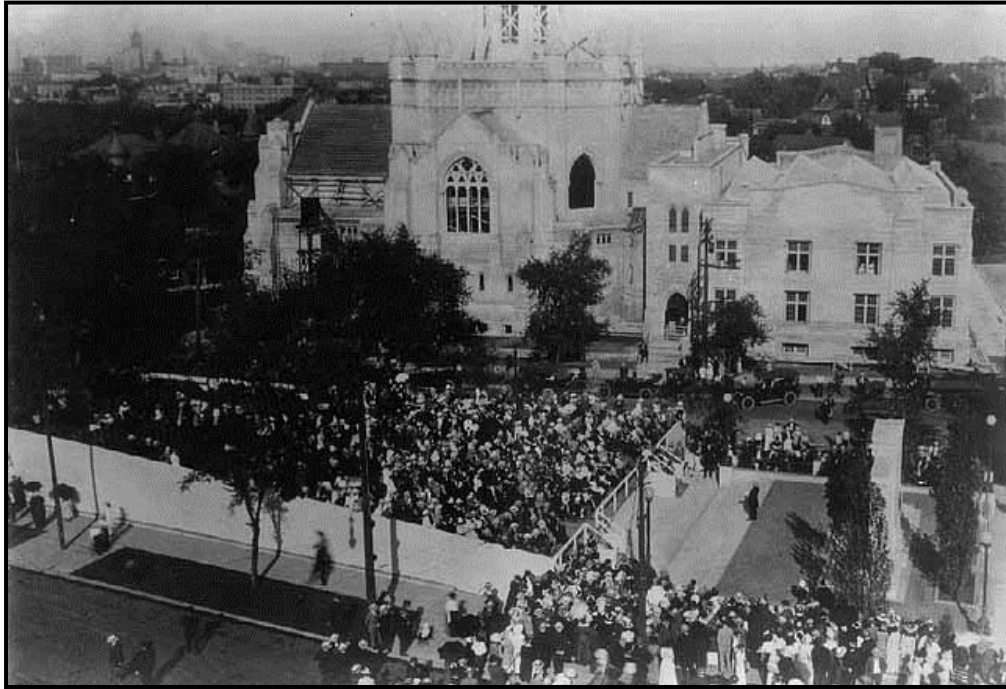


Figure 16, 1915 dedication ceremony, source: Minnesota Historical Society

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Figure 17, Thomas Lowry Memorial, year unknown, source: Hennepin County Public Libraries



Figure 18, memorial being cleaned, 1937, source: Minnesota Historical Society



Figure 19, damage to granite block base, southwest side, facing north, source: CPED Files



Figure 20, detail of damage to granite block base, 1954, source: Edwin Nelson as published in *Twin City Lines*

END NOTES

¹ *Minneapolis Community Basemap* [map]. Scale undetermined; City of Minneapolis; “Minneatlas”. (28 July 2014)

² Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 3.

³ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 4.

⁴ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 6.

⁵ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 9.

⁶ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 11-13.

⁷ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 12-17.

⁸ Rev. Marion D Shutter, *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest* (Chicago & Minneapolis: S J Clarke Publishing Company, 1923), 188.

⁹ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 18-20.

¹⁰ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 21.

¹¹ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 23-25.

¹² “King, William Smith, (1828-1900)”, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*. Office of the Historian, United States Congress.

¹³ David C Smith, “Parks, Lakes, Trails and So Much More”, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2008. 137.

¹⁴ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 24-35.

¹⁵ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*, (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 37-38.

¹⁶ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 39.

¹⁷ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 43-45.

¹⁸ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 48-50.

¹⁹ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 54-56.

²⁰ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 57-61.

²¹ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 68-69.

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²² Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 93.

²³ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 86-90.

²⁴ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin city Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 91-104.

²⁵ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 104-105.

²⁶ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 105-107.

²⁷ Goodrich Lowry *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 115.

²⁸ John W Diers and Aaron Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and Saint Paul* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2007), 47, 217, 230, 246-247, 249.

²⁹ John W Diers and Aaron Isaacs, *Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and Saint Paul* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2007), 4.

³⁰ Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 12.

³¹ Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 14.

³² Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *"Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 17.

³³ Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 18.

³⁴ Landscape Research, LLC, *East Isles Historic Context* (East Isles Residents Association, 2006), 15.

³⁵ City of Minneapolis, *1895 Plat Map*, 1895.

³⁶ David C. Smith, "Parks, Lakes, Trails and So Much More", Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2008, 228-229

³⁷ Ferdinand Schevill, *Karl Bitter: A Biography* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1917), xiii.

³⁸ Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 18-19.

³⁹ Ferdinand Schevill, *Karl Bitter: A Biography* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago, 1917), x-xi.

⁴⁰ Rev. Marion D Shutter, *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest* (Chicago & Minneapolis: S J Clarke Publishing Company, 1923), 438-441.

⁴¹ Steve Brandt, "A Walk Through History." *Star Tribune*, 28 April 2010.

⁴² *Minneapolis Golden Jubilee 1867-1917: A History of Fifty Years of Civic and Commercial Progress* (Minneapolis: The Lakeland Press, 1917), 106.

⁴³ Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, *Pillsbury Milling Complex*, MN-29-5H

⁴⁴ Rev. Marion D Shutter, *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest* (Chicago & Minneapolis: S J Clarke Publishing Company, 1923), 438-441.

⁴⁵ Minneapolis City Council, *Proceedings of the City Council of Minneapolis: Part 38*, (Minneapolis: The Council, 1912), 7a, 12a.

⁴⁶ Peter S Sussman, "The Thomas Lowry Memorial," *Twin City Lines* 5.2 (2011): 11-12.

⁴⁷ Office of the Inspector of Buildings, City of Minneapolis, *Permit to Build Outside of Fire Limits No. B106755*, Jon G Houghton, 1913.

⁴⁸ David C. Smith, "Parks, Lakes, Trails and So Much More", Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2008, 228-229

⁴⁹ Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, *Historic Waters of the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization* (Minneapolis: Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, 2011) 34.

⁵⁰ Goodrich Lowry, *Streetcar Man: Tom Lowry and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*. (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1979), 155.